

CHAPTER 3

Transforming Leaders to Succeed in the 21st Century

Sharon Lamm

Are you or your company facing challenges like these?

- Mergers/acquisitions
- Increased Global Competition
- Globalization
- Rapid growth or change
- Deregulation, restructuring, re-engineering
- Moving toward self-managed teams
- Technology that can change overnight

Powerful global forces are compelling organizations to continuously learn, innovate and change to remain competitive. If you are a leader or employee in a company today, chances are you find yourself facing some of the above 21st century challenges (Bennis, 1991; Drucker, 1997; O’Toole, 1995; Watkins and Marsick, 1993). These are often challenges where no expert or technical answers exist; so it is difficult for an individual or leader to claim unambiguous authority or expertise. Leaders are increasingly required to contend with unprecedented and complex conditions which makes the old “power over” command and control management style ineffective (Burke, 1997; Heifetz, 1994; Parks, 1997; Senge, 1990). One leader does not have all the answers to give to his employees and tell them exactly what to do. Leaders can no longer continue to do things the way they have in the past. This changing organizational context is requiring a transformation in leaders’ mindsets.

A CALL FOR A TRANSFORMATION IN LEADERSHIP POWER

A term I have used to describe the type of leadership required in today's complex environment is "Power With Leadership." It is stepping outside of the ego-based "power over" paradigm and into a paradigm where a leader:

1. Encourages others and himself to share different experiences, "stories" and expertise to help achieve a common goal.
2. Ensures that people's diverse strengths and abilities are recognized and used to achieve this common goal.
3. Listens to diverse perspectives and demonstrates empathy – is able to see through the eyes of another.
4. Forms strategic alliances because he/she recognizes that one person acting alone cannot accomplish what many working together can.
5. Takes into account complex interactions and interconnected relations.
6. Empowers people to make their own choices and is dedicated to his/her own and others continued growth and self-awareness.
7. Facilitates people to work cross-functionally and cross-regionally in high performing teams with an understanding, awareness and appreciation of differences.
8. Has the capacity for broader and more complex and global thinking.

Some leaders may be taking a self-directed approach to moving toward the "power with" leadership style, while others may not see the need to, or want to, change from a more "power over" style that they have become comfortable with. The same can be true of organizations as a whole. Some organizations have decided that the need exists for a new kind of leadership and have thought about what that means for them and how they therefore should change the content and process of their leadership development programs. Other organizations seem to espouse this change but may not have fully considered what this means for their new conceptualization of the leadership role, or what kind of development programs will help achieve this change. In either case, organizations may have created policies and practices around these desired changes

but may not yet have altered aspects of their performance and reward system to appropriately support these changes.

Regardless of where an organization as a whole falls in this development, there is a need for leadership development programs that can help foster transformative learning (defined below) from the “power over” command and control type style toward a “power with” style to address the challenges of the 21st century.

Volvo Truck Corporation (VTC) working in collaboration with MiL Institute and LIM (Leadership in International Management) proved that it is possible for a leadership development program to help foster this type of transformation and develop leaders to more effectively address 21st century challenges.

VTC did this by using the approach to leadership development called Action Reflection Learning™ (ARL™). VTC called these programs the VTM Programs (Volvo Truck Management Programs).

In this chapter, I hope to communicate the findings and implications of my dissertation study that looked at whether and how leaders who participated in the VTM Programs experienced transformative learning (defined below) and which leadership behaviors were most likely influenced through participation in the program. I hope this chapter will give new perspectives on what to look for in designing and selecting a leadership development program that can help foster transformation in the leader’s mindsets.

This chapter describes: 1) the general designs of the first six VTM Programs in 1990-1996, 2) the research study, 3) the VTM Program results, 4) conclusions and recommendations, and 5) implications for future practice.

THE VOLVO TRUCK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

One of the leading companies in the truck manufacturing business, Volvo Truck Corporation (VTC), was a bit ahead of the game, when in 1990 it

saw that significant changes were taking place in its business environment. These changes included recognition of a new global competition. VTC was becoming part of a global community with interrelated, economic, political, cultural and ecological interests. At the same time, the company reorganized to a decentralized structure. The formula that brought it success in the past – one that stressed production, manufacturing excellence and rapid decision making – had changed.

The VTC executive team realized that the changing business environment required a transformation in their leaders' mindsets – from the old manufacturing-focused directive boss toward a global leader who: 1) understands cultural differences and can work cross-functionally and cross-regionally in high performing teams, and 2) has a coaching style focusing on customer satisfaction, developing his people and himself. In effect VTC wanted to transform their leaders' mindsets from a “power over” to a “power with” paradigm (described above). They needed an approach for developing this type of leader who would have the skills and abilities to thrive on the challenges the company was facing.

Leadership development program to foster transformation

Eva Arnell who was responsible for Leadership and Competence Development in VTC had participated in a MiL program and was inspired to create a similar program for VTC, using the ARL leadership development philosophy. Despite some executive resistance, Eva creatively sold the idea of an ARL program to VTC (see Eva Arnell and Ernie Turner's Chapter 1 for more information). VTC called this program – The Volvo Truck Management Program (VTM)

MiL and LIM's ARL program emphasizes an equal emphasis on both action and reflection. This is accomplished through a combination of action (through project teamwork on strategically important business problems) and reflection (separate, specifically designed opportunities to think about what took place to learn from each other and from theory) (O'Neil & Marsick, 1994).

By 1997, the year I did my research, VTC had conducted six programs, one program per year. These programs engaged nearly 100 managers

from 16 different countries in the completion of 28 strategic business projects. Two examples of such projects are: 1) When, how and why should VTC use supplier partnerships? and 2) What are the major areas VTC should explore to extend its scope of business operations?

Each program involved 16-20 managers and ran for four five-day off-site meetings spread over six months. The four sessions were split between residential seminars and project work. Participants were divided into four project teams of four to six people each. To encourage cross-functional and cross-cultural communication, project teams were mixed to maximize diversity (i.e., greatest possible diversity with functions, cultures and personality). Cross-cultural communication was also fostered in that each program session took place in a different part of the globe.

Participants learned as they worked with real projects that were of strategic importance to VTC but were outside the normal scope of their professional skills. A key design premise is that the greatest opportunities for learning often occur when people are placed in unfamiliar territory with unfamiliar and complex tasks and relationships (MiL, 1994). With no experts around, leaders can no longer rely on previous knowledge. Creativity, innovation, courage and judgment become necessities.

A MiL or LIM learning coach helped each team to learn from their action and to balance action with reflection. Learning coaches are skilled in process facilitation, individual and group coaching. They support learning around business processes, applying just-in-time learning and constantly challenging the participants' mindsets and ways of working. In short, the learning coach acts as a model for coach oriented behavior (Rohlin, 1999). Learning coaches help foster reflection on oneself, leadership, team, and company/business problems (Marsick & Watkins, 1990). Learning coaches encourage reflection through stop-reflect breaks (LIM, 1993, MiL, 1994). Often the team reflects on questions posed by the learning coach and then discusses their reflections. Also, the coach works with tests, exercises and theory during "reflection time" in order to problematize, challenge or support the team and the individuals in learning about themselves, teams, the business and leadership.

Table 1 shows the program design for VTM Program two (1992). This table was developed from program design documents and learning coach

Program 2 1992	Main design components for Program 2
<p>Session one March (Belgium)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome/Get to know each other: Involved top management, project sponsor presentations, and project preparations. • Total group interactive lectures (26.5 hours): Lecturers included top management, learning coaches, and external presenters. Topics included scenario planning, the global environment of business, high performing teams, cultural differences with Belgians, strategies within the truck industry, and global competition. • Total group activities: Cultural evening (visit the local culture in teams) and beginning of business game (1 day). • Project work: approximately 2 days. • Total group reflection and dialogue sessions: 2 hours.
<p>Session two May (North Carolina)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project work (almost 3 days interspersed with lectures and activities). • Total group lectures: topics included cultural difference, business control, leader/manager skills, high performing teams, completion of Myers-Briggs Type Indicator – MBTI. • Total group reflection and dialogue: 2 hours. • Total group activities: business game and cultural evening.
<p>Session three September (England)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project work – 1.5 days. • Total group lectures: Topics included – MBTI, 360-degree feedback instrument, project team feedback, high performing team instrument and skill development. • Total group activities: Cultural evening and business game. • Total group reflection and dialogue: 2 hours.
<p>Session four October (Sweden)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total group lectures: global management and internal company presenters. • Total group activities: completion of business game, outdoor activities. • Project team presentation preparation. • Total group reflection and dialogue: 2 hours. • Project presentations to executive sponsors – 1 day w/ ending ceremony.

Table 1: The program design for VTM 2

interviews. Over time, from program two through six, minor design changes occurred. It appears that what changed was mostly the re-positioning of lectures and activities to different program weeks, the shortening or lengthening of some segments, and the experimenting with some new activities.

Based on Table 1 and other documents, there seemed to be thirteen common design components across the five programs:

1. The days were very long going from 8:00 a.m. to between 8:30 – 10:00 p.m. and some project teams continued meeting or took up informal gathering at the bar until very late.
2. Each week had an internal speaker talk about the local culture.
3. The cultural evenings involved going out into the local cultural community to learn something about it and creatively presenting the learning to the large group over dinner.
4. Whenever project teams met, a learning coach was most often with them helping them to reflect on their actions and providing observations and feedback about how the group worked together.
5. Learning coaches also provided just-in-time learning which are short traditional training segments consisting of exercises, theory and tools just when the participants need it. For example, if a project team had been struggling with making a decision for a while, the learning coach may have offered a decision-making model that could help them.
6. The location only changed from program to program in week three.
7. Project teams continued meeting between program weeks.
8. David Bohm's dialogue process (in Isaacs, 1993) was used, described as, "dialogue is to build on each other's...ideas, reflections, experiences and questions...not trying to defend one's opinion to convince the other one that you were right...more really listening and trying to understand the other person".
9. Members of the management visited each week and led discussions on leadership.
10. There was an outdoor team exercise for the total group.
11. MBTI was used as a common tool for understanding diversity and to help understand oneself.
12. The 360 feedback instrument.
13. The program ended with project presentations to top management.

In summary, the program had many continuous conditions as well as specific learning activities. Four key continuous conditions included:

1. Repeated teamwork opportunities balancing action and reflection, and encouraging dialogue.
2. The intensity of being spread over a long period of time, six months involving long hours.
3. Plenty of informal time for continued learning and fun.
4. Diversity in types of learning activities, participants, project team members, and cultural locations where the program was held.

Participants often described the creation of an open and trusting environment where they felt safe to be honest.

Vignette of a typical participant's program experience

While the above program description provides an intellectual description of the program, I hope that the following typical participant vignette gives an understanding of what it was like for a participant to actually participate in and experience the program.

After interviewing all 24 participants and listening to their individual program stories, a “typical” program experience began to emerge, and is described in the following vignette.

“As I am flying to Brugge, Belgium, for program session one, I am thinking – How can they expect us to keep all of our normal work and home life responsibilities when participating in this six-month program? I finally get to the session room and see fellow participants with different personalities and from different cultures and functions. And OH my GOD they have those chairs in a circle. This is going to be one of those “touchy feely” things. I want to go hide now.

According to the agenda, it looks like we'll have very little free time and the program goes until late in the evening. One night is a cultural evening where we will explore Brugge. I have never been outside the US and I don't like NOT being able to speak the language. Where can I get a Pepsi?

We are now in our first project team meeting. We got our project and everyone is trying to get to work except for the French guy at the end of the table who I am wondering if he can even talk. This damn learning coach just stopped our action and wants us to reflect and write in journals. We were making progress until he became involved!

Good that it is over and now we are in the business game. I love competition and we will win. The other marketing guy and myself are taking control and OH NOT AGAIN – here that learning coach stops us to reflect again. However, in the reflection, I learned that the French guy who wasn't saying anything could not speak English that well and had no clue what was going on and felt left out and two other introvert team members also felt left out. It turns out that they had the best ideas if we would have stopped to listen. I don't like excluding others and I wonder if I have always done this? I am a pretty strong extravert and probably have always talked over others. I want to start to change this.

We are back in the large group of 20 participants doing a reflection and dialogue session, and I can't believe what people are sharing – You mean I am not alone in having these problems? Maybe we all are just simply human? At the same time I am hearing completely new points of view from those that bring different backgrounds.

Between session one and two we met and were more productive because the learning coach was not slowing us down. Session two was in the U.S. where we made reflecting on action a part of the way we work. I saw how taking pauses to reflect on what we were doing and how we were working together slowed us down in order to speed us up. We actually were more productive in the long run by slowing down to reflect on our action, so we decided to use this stopping and reflecting whenever we work as a team. And I am starting to use it back at work with my team.

I am now on my way to week 3 – in India. I am really glad that I got to know these guys because we are getting into some personal stuff – Myers Briggs, 360 and team feedback, and the lifeline exercise where we share life experiences. All of these tools are giving me insights into who I am. Walking down the streets of India seeing a woman with a dying baby ask me for small change really had an impact on me. What do I possibly have to complain about? What is the meaning of life anyway? How do I become a better husband, father and member of the human race?

In the lifelines exercise one guy even broke down in tears telling us how, burned out he was and how he sacrificed his entire personal life for work.

I felt complete empathy for him and I saw myself heading down that road. We stayed up talking at the bar until 4:00 a.m. His story helped me find renewed balance between home and work life, which surprisingly has made me more productive at work. I find if I am happier at home, I am happier and more productive at work.

Between sessions three and four we met to finish our project and prepared for and made our presentation to executive management during session 4 in Sweden. I found out that I got a new job and I think it will be really good for me to continue to practice what I have learned. I now have 100 additional employees, so I will have to continue to let go of control and delegate. I am sad this is ending – funny – when I started I thought this was going to be a royal pain in the “***!” – Now I see it was one of the best personal experiences of my life.”

THE RESEARCH STUDY

For those readers who are interested in how I did my research, I briefly describe my research study below. If you are not interested in this section, please skip directly to the next section about the VTM results.

It was clear that VTC wanted transformation in their leaders’ mindsets as one outcome of the program, and this was the primary focus of my qualitative research study. Specifically I had three research questions that I wanted to answer:

1. To what extent, if at all, did the program foster transformative learning?
2. Which, if any, leadership behaviors were most likely influenced by participation in the program?
3. In what ways did conditions foster or hinder transformative learning?

Transformative learning

Transformative learning is very difficult to measure (Mezirow, 1991). This may explain that even when leadership development programs are designed to achieve transformation, there is little documentation that supports conclusions about the resulting impact. I developed my own framework for studying transformative learning that you can find in my

dissertation (Lamm, 2000). I think this framework could be helpful to anyone who is interested in determining whether a leadership development or other educational program fostered transformative learning.

For the purpose of my research, I adapted Jack Mezirow's (1995) definition of transformative learning:

"When a distorted, inauthentic, or otherwise unjustified assumption is replaced with a new belief or paradigm resulting in thinking and actions that are more differentiated, inclusive, reflective, complex and empathic, patient, humble and tolerant." (Lamm, 2000 p. 5 adapted from Mezirow, 1995).

When I say I adapted Mezirow's definition, I added the more human qualities – empathy, patience, humility, tolerance – to potential outcomes of transformative learning. These qualities were key outcomes in my research, yet were not discussed in the current transformative learning literature. I hope that future researchers keep them in mind as potential outcomes when studying transformative learning.

I used Mezirow's definition because it is the most comprehensive transformative learning theory that integrates a number of theoretical contributions, including Dewey, Freire, Kuhn, Gould and Habermas. Also, ARL has been cited as a possible approach for fostering Mezirow's transformative learning (Marsick, 1990).

The research study design

My research was a qualitative case study of the perceptions of people in VTC, MiL and LIM. The research sample included 24 program participants (representing about 25% of the total population), 24 people who work with them (co-workers), three learning coaches, and one key executive. The participant sample was demographically comparative to the participant population and included participants from across six different cultures (Swedish, British, French, Belgian, Australian, and American) and five different programs (VTM 2-6 from 1992 through 1996).

I used a number of data collection methods including: 1) document analysis (staff documents, descriptive staff interviews, program evaluations and

designs, population demographics), 2) pre-interview forms (demographic and descriptive data of learning experiences), 3) participant, executive and learning coach interviews, 4) participant leadership reflection forms, and 5) co-worker critical incident questionnaires.

Analysis of the literature and document review helped to develop the initial data collection instruments. Again see Lamm, 2000 for copies of the actual instruments. All data collection instruments were pilot- and field-tested. Several peers and I open coded (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) the pilot and field test data, revised the instruments and developed an initial coding scheme. Dr. Mezirow reviewed the instruments and agreed they were providing the necessary information.

Five participant interviews then took place. At least 1.5 months prior to the interview, each participant completed a pre-interview form. The five co-worker questionnaires were tailored based on the participant descriptions of personal change and then distributed. This process was repeated with the remaining 19 participants. To help clarify questions raised (i.e., about program design), the learning coach and executive interviews were spread over time, taking place at the beginning, middle and end of participant interviews.

All interviews were taped and transcribed verbatim. Participant interviews were summarized in several ways and coded and synthesized using the constant comparative method (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

An effective data analysis process including a coding scheme was developed for assessing whether transformative learning occurred. This process included: 1) a before and after comparison in a participant's thinking and actions; 2) the gathering of statements that either supported or ran contrary to demonstrations of commonly cited transformative learning outcomes, namely a more differentiated, inclusive, reflective and complex perspective manifested in successful action; 3) triangulation of all data sources (including co-worker sources) for each individual; 4) an assessment as to whether a transformative shift occurred; and 5) an identification through coding and tables of the ways in which certain individual, program and organization conditions helped and hindered transformative learning. If the learning did not appear to be transformative learning,

it was characterized as non-transformative learning, defined as “adding knowledge, refining a skill or further differentiating or integrating ideas – thereby providing evidence to confirm or give additional support to current practices/points of view” (Lamm, 2000, p. 126).

A research design that can be used in future research

This data analysis process was developed in response to a gap in the transformative learning research literature where researchers have not been explicit about how they identified whether transformative learning occurred. I chose to be explicit, comprehensive and objective in this assessment so future researchers can use the process and clients such as VTC can feel comfortable with program evaluation results.

Inter-rater reliability with peers and subject matter experts was sought and found at three different points during the research process. In addition, Dr. Jack Mezirow and two other subject matter experts reviewed three participant analyses and confirmed the presence of transformative learning. Also, two peers reviewed all cases of transformative learning and confirmed the presence of such learning. After all data were analyzed/synthesized, member checks were conducted and findings were compared and found consistent with program evaluation documents and learning coach interviews.

While the data analysis process I developed is comprehensive and effective, the research design also had limitations. Below, Table 2 displays the limitations and how I managed them.

Key Limitations	Compensating for the Limitation
<p>The primary data sources used for assessing whether transformative learning occurred are self-report in nature.</p>	<p>Reliance on self-report data is a limitation stated in the literature (Mezirow, 1991). At the same time studying transformative learning requires entering another's interpretive frame of reference which often requires reliance on self-report data (Mezirow, 1991). I compensated for this limitation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a tailored co-worker questionnaire to compare whether a participant's espoused theory was perceived as his/her theory-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1978). • Gathering specific behavioral examples that demonstrated each participant's stated claims. • Using multiple self-report sources.
<p>A skewed participant sample exists as a result of drawing a convenience sample.</p>	<p>Due to time, cost and travel constraints, I could only visit six countries to conduct interviews, so I asked for volunteers from these countries. Perhaps those that volunteered had greater learning than those who did not. However, this type of sampling did serve the purpose of this study which is Yin's (1994) analytic generalization not statistical generalization.</p>
<p>I have professional experience with ARL. With my experience comes the potential for certain biases.</p>	<p>I compensated for potential bias by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having several peers and subject matter experts review my data collection instruments. • Journaling and remaining conscious of my own assumptions when conducting interviews. • Using Miles and Huberman's (1994) inter-rater reliability process at many points throughout the process. • Conducting participant member checks.

Table 2: Key limitations and compensating for each limitation

Based on a review of other transformative learning studies, my study seemed unique in that it compensated for the self-report limitation in three different ways (see row 1, Table 2 above). Most transformative learning studies had only one source of self-report data, namely participant interviews. In this study, the tailored co-worker questionnaire asked a co-worker to validate that he/she had seen evidence of the individual participant's described change. The targeted behavioral interview questions helped generate specific behavioral examples of thinking and behavior changes. The multiple self-report data sources helped assess the degree of consistency across various sources.

THE VTM PROGRAM RESULTS

While VTM wanted to foster a transformation in their leaders' mindsets, they also wanted to achieve business results through the project teams solving critical business problems. Many of these project solutions made and saved the company money. The following are examples of some of the business results that were achieved:

- Savings of \$7 millions by designing an innovative distribution system that surpasses your #1 competitor.
- Savings of \$3 millions in raw material procurement costs through a well developed internal benchmark study.
- Savings of millions by recovering a dealer who had previously cancelled all orders.

As these business results suggest, a great advantage with MiL and LIM's ARL program is that "earning while learning" is fostered.

However, the main focus of my research was to answer my three research questions which dealt with seeing whether the leaders actually did experience transformative learning and what conditions helped them to do so. These are the results presented below. It is important to note that any of the participant names used below are fictitious in order to protect the confidentiality of the actual program participants.

Question 1: To what extent, if at all, did the ARL program foster transformative learning?

Answer: 22 of the 24 participants interviewed experienced transformative learning. Eight of the 22 experienced transformation in more than one learning area. The program helped to foster transformative learning to varying extents based on where the program fell in one's individual and organizational contexts. In other words, for 12 participants the program triggered transformative learning, and for 10 participants the program moved along or helped to integrate a previously started transformation. In all cases of transformation, the organizational context (i.e., job change) either triggered or helped to integrate the learning into their daily lives.

Transformative learning fell into three learning areas – inclusiveness, self-understanding, and reflective action. Each is described below.

Inclusiveness

While 18 participants appear to have shifted in inclusiveness, it was expressed in three different ways: 1) 11 discussed a broader or more global perspective; 2) 9 described a change in their overall leadership definition/style; and 3) 18 referred to replacing more directive “power over” with more inclusive “power with” behaviors. The reason the numbers do not add up to 18 is because many fell into more than one category.

A common thread across all three categories was an opening to acceptance of difference. A program participant, Mike, illustrates this common theme: “I more accept that people are different... It can be very enriching to have different viewpoints.” A common shift was from thinking everyone thought like them to believing everyone has a different perspective and valuing that perspective.

Sunny provides an illustration for the 11 who had a transformation toward a broader more global perspective:

“The program was the first time that I got to go abroad, to be strange in a strange land, to get thrown in with people from totally different cultures, different backgrounds. I see myself more part of the world now ... I don't see my little corner of the world as important as it used to be. I identify more as a member of the human race and less as a member of the United States of America ... Now when I say Volvo, I think of the whole world and what can we do on this end that ties into what they are doing 10,000 miles away that makes things better for the whole.”

Lance provides an illustration of the 9 participants experiencing a transformation in his overall leadership style from “power over” to “power with”:

(Before the program) “I was convinced I was the owner of the truth ... I was too directive. After the program I said that nobody has the truth ... It is possible for me to say or to think I was wrong ... Consensus is not in the French language – In France – I'm right or I'm wrong ... in the program I discover that it's more productive if I have others' points of view, and I change if they are right because you cannot as one man think of everything.”

The 18 who shifted toward more “power with” behaviors described six ways in which they were acting differently:

- 1) delegation and trust,
- 2) teambuilding,
- 3) listening,
- 4) improving personal life,
- 5) demonstrating humility, and
- 6) teaching others what they had learned.

Many described moving from a “power over” self-doing way to involving others as Lee illustrates,

“(Before the program) I wanted to do everything myself ... and today I’m not ... I realized the quickest way to reach results is to involve others.”

Self-Understanding

Eight participants described transformative learning in self-understanding which involved an apparent replacement of a lower self-esteem perspective with a more self-confident and self-aware perspective. Steve provides a useful example:

“(Before the program) I didn’t have a great self image ... When I got accepted into the program, I thought oh my GOD I can’t run with the big dogs (i.e., his peers in the program), then I found out, hey I can run with the big dogs and some of these dogs are chasing me ... I became self- confident ... I did come back ... sort of pushing for a broader role that I could play in the organization. Once you become confident you can do it, then you can sell it.”

Also six of the eight participants said they now have the courage to take a stand, even when it means being the minority opinion. Five of the eight also described accepting and expressing their feelings as another aspect of self-understanding. After the program, they saw and accepted their feelings as part of their whole self.

Reflective action

Six participants described a transformation in reflective action, replacing a perspective that did not value reflection with one that values reflection on action (or becoming conscious of action to learn from it). Lance provides an example:

“I never did that reflection before – I cannot imagine that we have to lose time ... but when you are (focused on) too many problems, your brain is not able to make synthesis. I was not using my brain before. After (the program) for me reflection is natural and my brain is doing that automatically ... the program changed me – changed my thinking, actions and being.”

Question 2: Which, if any, leadership behaviors were most likely influenced through participation in the program and to what extent could they be considered transformative?

Answer: The broad answer to this question is that the program fostered:

1. New leadership behaviors that were consistent with the type of leader VTC wanted to develop (described above in The Volvo Truck Management Program) within and across the areas of inclusiveness, self-understanding, and reflective action.
2. Enhanced human qualities in leadership (empathy, tolerance, humility, and patience).
3. Improved personal lives.

The enhancement of the human qualities was consistent across all cases of transformative learning. This is why I recommended adding these human qualities as affective outcomes when looking for the presence of transformative learning. It appeared as if the participants were not only opening their minds but were also opening their hearts.

An example of becoming more humble is one participant who said:

“Before (the program) ... I was very rigid – always thinking I was right ... Now I’m not always sure (laughs) ... I have always my ideas ... but I

can discuss with other people ... The relation with my team is ... different now ... That's good learning, which I have humility around ... I am not always right and I can speak my faults."

An example of becoming more empathic and tolerant is another participant who said:

"The program helped me to understand that everybody has a different perspective on things ... so what I am trying much more than before is to really listen and to put myself into the other person's situation – Why does he say it like that? What does he know that I may not know?"

Finally, many participants also improved their personal lives (i.e., spending more quality time with family and in community organizations that mattered to them) which they linked to being more effective at work. Sunny talked about how before the program he was a workaholic and a micro-manager where he controlled every one of his employees and as a result did not have time for his family or other interests. After the program, he has transferred his better listening skills to his family and effectively balances his time between family, work, and community interests. This more balanced lifestyle has forced him to learn how to effectively delegate and trust his employees which in turn has resulted in greater business productivity, efficiency and higher employee morale.

The enhancement of human qualities (empathy, tolerance, patience and humility) and improved personal lives had a direct impact on the bottom line. These leaders became better human beings. Becoming better human beings made them better leaders and more effective, efficient and productive in the workplace. In VTC's case, these better human beings achieved the bottom line business results discussed at the beginning of this section leading to millions of dollars of savings and profits for the company.

Question 3: In what ways did certain conditions foster or hinder participants in experiencing transformative learning?

Answer: Individual, program, and organizational conditions interacted in complex ways to foster or hinder a cumulative transformation process.

Factors that helped transformation to occur

Individual conditions

- All 22 participants who experienced transformative learning said that they had little to no previous experience in the learning area in which they transformed. For example, Lyle, a scientist at VTC, experienced transformation in self-understanding and had never done any personal development prior to the program – the area was completely new to him.
- Introvert and feeling Myers-Briggs personality types were more likely to experience self-understanding transformations, while thinking types were more likely to experience reflective action transformations.

Program conditions

- All 22 participants said that the intensity, duration or frequency of certain program conditions were critical in fostering transformation. Participants could not escape the six-month program with long hours, four program sessions and project work required between the sessions. This together with the continued repetition of certain program conditions like project work with reflection breaks helped solidify new behaviors into habits.
- Fifteen participants who experienced transformative learning mentioned the importance of the diversity of participants in fostering their learning. Maximizing participant diversity is a foundation of the program, including having a “max mix” of diversity on project teams. This allowed for hearing alternative and diverse perspectives that helped many realize that other people think differently and different perspectives are important to gather and include.
- Eleven participants described an open, trusting and supportive program environment where participants bonded and became friends and felt safe to share personal experiences and feedback. One of the key roles of the learning coach is to develop this environment. In addition, informal time such as drinking at the bar, eating, and traveling together fostered this environment.
- The experiential activities such as Myers-Briggs, Lifelines, 360 feedback, rope exercise and business game often fostered many new awarenesses which triggered transformations (see below).

- As mentioned earlier, another foundation of MiL and LIM's program design is to put participants in unfamiliar and new situations such as, new cultures where the program is held, ARL project teams where they had little to no expertise in the project topic area, presenters who deliver lectures designed to stir up one's thinking, diversity of program participants, etc. Putting participants in unfamiliar and new situations often interacted with the individual condition of having no previous experience in a learning area to foster a new awareness and trigger a transformation.
- Several participants felt alone as a result of being excluded or felt empathy when seeing another excluded or when hearing another share an emotional personal story. This was the most commonly mentioned initial trigger that started an individual's transformative process. Often the teamwork activities together with language or self- confidence difficulties and personality differences resulted in one or more team members feeling excluded. Reflection and dialogue about these feelings often fostered a new awareness about inclusion/exclusion and realizing that an individual's difference was a valued strength.

Organization conditions

- Nine participants said how a supportive (i.e., one that is consistent with program concepts) organizational culture helped their learning. For example, the Belgian factory was undergoing a reorganization to work teams, so the employees in the factory were hungry to learn about teams. This helped the Belgian program participants continue to apply and practice their new teamwork behaviors that they learned in the program.
- Seven participants mentioned the importance of having supportive co-workers/bosses as helping them continue to practice new behaviors.
- 18 participants said how their job change or new project assignment, around the time of the program, helped them to integrate new behaviors into their daily work. Five participants experienced a job change before or during the program, while 13 experienced a job change soon after the program. Regardless of where the job change occurred it helped participants as it provided a new environment where participants could start fresh without the pressure to conform to old co-worker/boss perceptions.

Factors that hindered transformation

Individual Conditions

- Having much previous experience in a learning area hindered transformative learning in that area. For example, those participants who had traveled extensively did not experience transformation in the inclusiveness global and cultural difference areas.

Program conditions

- Eleven participants mentioned the lack of program continuation (after the nine month program) as a hindrance to continuing to integrate the behaviors into daily life. However, even with this hindrance, the majority of participants said that they believe their learning has lasted because of the length and intensity of the program.
- Twelve participants mentioned that having too many Swedish participants in the program or having a homogenous project team (i.e., not enough personality, cultural or functional difference) hindered their learning because there was not enough diversity to hear different perspectives.

Organization conditions

- Eleven participants described a non-supportive culture as a hindrance. For example, the Americans had a difficult time continuing to apply teamwork behaviors because their company reward system was still based on individual work.
- Four participants mentioned the lack of top management support as a hindrance. Many of the participants' bosses were not interested in the program and felt it was a distraction from their work which made it difficult to apply new behaviors in the midst of such cynicism.

How conditions interacted to foster transformative learning

According to the model displayed in Figure 1 below, a complex interaction of these individual, program, and organizational conditions fosters a stimulus (either before or after the program) that triggers an initial new awareness as well as the transformative learning process. The initial stimulus presents a discrepancy or mismatch between an existing belief/

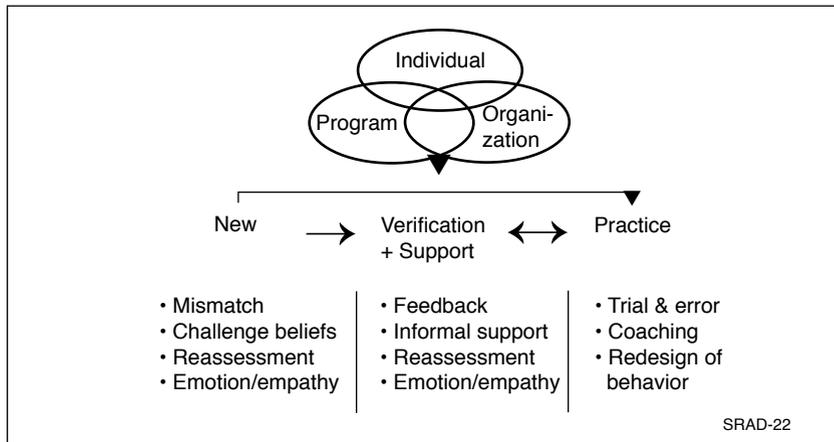


Figure 1: The inside ÷ out transformation model

action and what one is currently experiencing (i.e., a less jolting version of Mezirow’s 1995, disorienting dilemma). This is often accompanied by emotions and causes the individual to begin to challenge and reflect on his/her original belief, reassess the belief and try on a new belief. I define a new awareness as an experimental trying on of a new point of view.

The individual subsequently verifies this new awareness with peers and loved ones (often through soliciting and gaining informal feedback and support) and practices new behaviors consistent with the new awareness. Simultaneously, various stimuli continue to trigger the transformative learning process within a learning area (i.e., inclusiveness) or across learning areas. Eventually, an individual may take on a new paradigm, integrate it into his/her life and demonstrate rational outcomes (more differentiated, inclusive, complex and reflective thinking/actions) and affective outcomes (improved empathy, tolerance, humility and patience).

An example of some typical new awarenesses fostered by program conditions are displayed in Table 3. Nine program conditions were mentioned more often than others as leading to new awarenesses.

Commonly Mentioned Program Conditions (# of participants)	Typical New Awarenesses Fostered
1. Experiencing participants' diversity (i.e., during project team work) (15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Others think differently than I do • Underneath difference, everyone is human • Let go of control, share leadership • Diverse teams lead to better results
2. Having many Swedish participants in the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Trucking Express is not really a global company • Only Swedish managers have opportunity to progress to higher leadership positions in the company
3. Receiving feedback (i.e., from 360-degree, MBTI, project team, or learning coach) (12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I never realized I did not listen • Awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses <p>Note: The nature of the new awareness was linked to the content of the feedback.</p>
4. Feeling (or viewing another feel) excluded or "less than." (11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to include all team members • My contribution/difference is valued
5. Business Game Simulation (7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let go of control, share leadership • Teamwork leads to better business results • Others think differently than I do • It is important to include all team members
6. Experiencing new cultures (7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am a member of the human race • My area of the world is not all there is • Re-evaluation of personal values
7. Cultural difference or scenario lectures (7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other cultures are different • Reflecting before acting can lead to better results
8. Lifelines exercise (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is OK to feel; feelings are part of being human • A balance between work and personal life is critical • Re-evaluation of personal values
9. Visiting dealers and customers (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am completely ignorant about our dealers • It is OK to learn from mistakes • Let go of control, share leadership

Table 3: Program conditions fostering new awarenesses

While Table 3 displays some specific program conditions that fostered new awarenesses, it is important to remember that these specific conditions were taking place within the broader program context (i.e., continuous program conditions - described earlier), as well as one's individual and organizational contexts. Therefore, the specific activities cannot be removed from the overall context in which they took place.

In fact, several program conditions often fostered typical new awarenesses within a learning area. Table 4 shows the program conditions and the Table 4:

Program Conditions	Typical New Awarenesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling/empathy seeing another feel excluded • Diversity in project team with ARL • Project team or 360 feedback • Experiencing cultures/customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including others is important • Others think differently than I do • We are all human • Shared leadership works • Teams can produce better results • I never knew I did not listen • My little world is not all there is

Table 4: Multiple new awarenesses – inclusiveness

typical new awarenesses they fostered within the transformative learning area of inclusiveness.

These multiple new awarenesses with the subsequent verification/support and practice often fostered a cumulative transformation in an individual’s inclusiveness paradigm.

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

As mentioned earlier, this study was undertaken to see whether the VTM Program was having the desired impact – transformative learning. VTC was pleased to see a transformation in many of their leaders’ mindsets – from the old manufacturing-focused directive boss to a global leader. A global leader who understands cultural differences and works cross-functionally and regionally in high performing teams. This new leader also develops his people and himself and has a coaching style focused on listening to others and customer satisfaction. The results indicated a movement toward the “power with” leadership paradigm, described above, as important to effectively address the challenges of the 21st century.

While the program appeared to foster transformative learning, as Table 5 suggests, some recommendations have the potential to make future program designs even more effective.

Conclusions	Recommendations
<p>The program played an important role in fostering transformative learning.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All continuous program conditions should remain part of the program, including: project teamwork with ARL, diversity of program participants** and locations, informal time, open and trusting environment, and the intensity, duration and frequency inherent in the program design. 2. To increase the opportunity for transformative learning, explore additional ways to foster opportunities for: 1) sharing personal life experiences/stories, 2) debriefing when team members feel excluded, and 3) exposure to unfamiliar situations and people. <p>** VTM participants mentioned the hindrance of having too many Swedish participants in the program. Care should be taken not to over-emphasize one culture or functional area in the participant mix. A balanced mix of diversity (i.e., culture, job functions, gender) is ideal.</p>
<p>The program in and of itself was not enough to foster transformative learning. A variety of individual, program and organizational contextual conditions interacted in complex ways to foster transformative learning.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incorporate an inclusive-context mentality in future program designs by including the immediate individual and organizational contexts surrounding the program in the program design, thereby increasing the opportunity for transformative learning. 2. Build new assignments or job changes into the program designs as this helps to both trigger and
<p>Participants need continued support after the program to continue to integrate their new behaviors into their daily lives. The “after program” context is just as important as the stimuli that trigger transformative learning.</p>	<p>To provide additional support after the program, implement one or more of the following action steps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make implementation of recommendations part of project teamwork • Sponsor an annual reunion for all program graduates • Create a computer system for continued support • Develop a learning retention hot-line • Institute a 360-degree feedback process one-year after program completion • Include a session on resistance to change in the program

Table 5: Conclusions and recommendations for program design

I see two main contributions of this research. First, this study provides information that could increase the capacity to design leadership development programs that foster transformative learning. Below, I recommend a new approach for program design that may enhance the capacity for transformative learning, as it moves away from viewing a program as an event and toward an inclusive systems-context approach. I also

believe the recommendations and conclusions need to be tested in other ARL and leadership development programs to see whether they support transformative learning in other contexts.

This study is a case study and the conclusions and recommendations pertain to the ARL program design at VTC, and are bound by the context of this study. However, with analytical generalization (Yin, 1994) while the results are contextually bound, they may cover broader theoretical issues in future transformative learning studies as well as other ARL and leadership development programs.

I believe that a number of the program's components and activities described by participants as "triggering" transformative learning could be applied in other leadership development programs to test whether they would have a similar impact in another context. For example, opportunities for sharing personal life experiences/stories, maximizing the diverse mix of participants, debriefing when participants feel excluded, exposure to unfamiliar situations and people, and building new assignments or job changes into the program design may help foster transformative learning in other leadership development programs.

In addition, I believe the learning coach is a critical component in maximizing the potential for transformative learning and could be included in other leadership development programs. While the learning coach was not specifically mentioned as a key condition in fostering transformative learning, many activities that the learning coach facilitated were mentioned (i.e., reflection breaks). This could confirm that the learning coaches were doing their job. A good learning coach is one that makes him/herself invisible and creates an environment where the learning comes from the participants.

With respect to recommending a new inclusive-context approach to program design, VTC took an inside-out approach to organizational change. They sought to change leaders from the inside and then hoped the leaders would become change agents and spread their change throughout the organization. In fact, some research has shown that change processes do not require the 100% commitment of all employees but 10-15% of key players who have the power to influence the rest. Many VTM participants

described spreading change in their individual departments and many discussed how difficult it was to spread the change within an organizational culture and with organizational systems that often ran counter to the desired changes. As participants spoke, I often got the image of one man pushing against a heavy, solid mountain trying to move it. Therefore, I feel that VTC and other organizations could maximize the potential for organizational and individual transformation by simultaneously taking an inside-out and outside-in approach.

An outside-in approach would include an assessment of the organizational context at the time of the program. An organizational needs assessment could reveal any organizational conditions that might inhibit continued application of concepts learned in the program. Also, if the program is an ARL program, this knowledge could help identify projects for the next program. For example, one hindrance raised by participants in this study was the difficulty of applying team concepts within an individual reward system. A potential team project could be developing recommendations and implementing a team reward system to help support the application of new and desired behaviors back on the job.

At the same time VTC's inside-out approach could be strengthened. Prior to the program, pre-program interviews and short surveys could solicit descriptions of the individual participant's current personal and professional contexts, as well as their previous experience in the learning subject areas. Information such as this could help assess readiness for the learning experience, and assist with the selection of participants.

Using this inside-out and outside-in approach includes the individual and organizational contexts in the program design which I believe could increase the potential for individual as well as organizational change.

However, conducting programs such as the ARL program at VTC also raises practical issues for organizations. With respect to practicality (i.e., time and money spent), given the organizations I have worked in, VTC seems more like an exception than the norm. Many organizations want to minimize what should be a week-long program into two days, so how likely is it that organizations will undertake a six-month program and implement systems to support the learning back in the workplace? Of

course, one could argue that organizations may spend just as much, if not more, time and money on a number of two day event programs that do not reap such significant benefits.

For those organizations that cannot buy the above argument and where a six to nine month program simply will not work, another possibility around the practicality issue is for organizations to experiment with varying program lengths. For example, I was on the staff of one organization who chose to do an action learning program over the span of six to eight weeks with three two-day programs spread over time. The organization was also using other programs and systems to help develop a culture that supports learning, dialogue and feedback. Implementing something like this together with some of Table 5's recommended action steps to support integrating the learning after the program may reap similar benefits as the ARL program in this study.

Another possibility is for organizations such as MiL, LIM or the Center for Creative Leadership, who specialize in leadership and professional development, to implement some of the recommendations and approaches suggested in this study. This way an organization can send their key talent to the programs rather than collaborating and spending the time and money to develop the program in-house.

Another question is how practical it is to spend so much time and investment given the trend of increasing turnover and career changes. One argument for doing so would be that the organization would reap the benefits while the person remains with them. In addition, several of this study's participants said that they felt an increased loyalty to VTC as a result of seeing how much investment the company put into them and the program. These participants have chosen to change jobs and careers within the company rather than outside of it. In fact, all 24 participants remained employed by VTC in 2000, which for some had been eight years since graduating from the program. This result provides an argument for ARL programs to be possible retention strategies for a company's key players/change agents.

A second key contribution of this study is that it provides an explicit and comprehensive methodological process for assessing whether transformative learning occurred that can be used in future research

and program evaluation studies. The study enhances our understanding of transformative learning and raises several interesting possibilities for future research. For example, it would be interesting to select a sample of participants who learned a great deal and loved the program and participants who did not learn as much and may not view the program as highly and explore what accounts for the difference between these two sample sets.

I hope that we all can continue to explore ways in which ARL can become less of a program event and more of a normal way of doing business. I believe that ARL is a perfect process to use on a daily basis to solve Heifetz's (1994) complex adaptive problems where no known answers exist and people have to find their way through.

I encourage future researchers and practitioners to test the model, methodology, and program design recommendations in other contexts and look forward to a continued learning journey.

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